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Draft country programme document for the Comoros (2008-2012)

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Introduction

1. The Union of the Comoros consists of four islands: Mwali, Ndzuwani, Ngazidja and Maore. As Maore is under French administration, the data furnished herein relate to the other three islands. The formulation of the country programme document began with the preparation, by means of a participatory process, of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF). The process involved the definition of outcomes and outputs. On 30 January 2007, the programme document was considered at a meeting of Government and civil-society representatives. At a workshop held on 1 February 2007, it was endorsed by members of the Government, senior public administration officials and representatives of civil society, the private sector and United Nations organizations, as well as external partners.

I. Situation analysis

2. For the past few years, the Comoros, with a population of about 620,000 in 2007, has experienced weak economic growth amounting to some 2 per cent; this lags behind the population growth rate, estimated at 2.1 per cent. As a result, per capita gross domestic product (GDP) has been slipping and, in 2004, the poverty rate stood at 45 per cent of all individuals and 37 per cent of all households. This poverty is due to the political, institutional, economic and environmental crisis that has plagued the country for the past 10 years; unequal income distribution; weak public and private investment (amounting to barely 10 per cent of GDP) and, accordingly, sluggish employment growth in the modern sector; the lack of economic diversification, which makes the country vulnerable to external shocks; and the fact that the majority of the rural population still engages in subsistence agriculture on land that is quickly becoming degraded.

3. The 2005 national report on progress towards the Millennium Development Goals indicates that the Comoros will reach only two of the Goals if current human development trends persist: Goal 2 on universal primary education and Goal 4 on the under-five mortality rate. Two targets will be hard to achieve: (a) halving, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people who suffer from hunger, and (b) reversing the loss of environmental resources.

4. In the late 1990s a separatist movement plunged the country into a crisis, which was followed by a national reconciliation process in the framework of a new configuration giving broad autonomy to the islands. Democratization has continued with the holding of free, transparent elections for the legislature (2004) and the presidency (2006) and the establishment of democratic institutions. However, the laws on the division of powers have come up against implementation problems at the levels of both the Union and the individual islands. The Government is addressing these problems through public administration reform, anti-corruption measures and the rehabilitation of public finances.

5. Environmental resources have become degraded. All the arable land is already being used and agriculture cannot expand without encroaching on the remaining forest areas. The proportion represented by the country's forest areas fell from 6.6 per cent in 1990 to 2.8 per cent in 2005. The constraints facing the Comoros are similar to those affecting all small island developing States, which were highlighted

in Agenda 21 and the Barbados Programme of Action: ecological and economic fragility, special vulnerability to climate change and natural disasters, poor response and management capacity, a narrow resource base and high energy costs. Women are active in national wealth creation and have made significant contributions in this regard. However, they are largely sidelined from decision-making processes (women occupy 4 per cent of the country's parliamentary posts and 8 per cent of its government posts).

6. The interim Poverty Reduction and Growth Strategy Paper (PRGSP) prepared in 2003 and updated in 2005 reflects a consensus on the part of development actors in the Comoros. Its aim is to promote economic growth of at least 5 per cent per year and to halve monetary poverty by 2015. It focuses on seven key areas, including: (a) generating the conditions for sustainable economic development; (b) boosting the private sector by focusing on growth sectors; (c) strengthening governance and justice; and (d) promoting a healthy environment and guaranteeing that development is sustainable. The paper also notes that the promotion of human rights and gender mainstreaming should be built into the implementation of all development programmes.

II. Past cooperation and lessons learned

7. The 2003-2007 country cooperation framework focused on three key areas: governance, poverty and the conservation and sustainable management of natural resources. In the area of poverty reduction, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) achieved significant results through its support for the participatory PRGSP process: poverty analyses, monitoring and evaluation of progress towards the Millennium Development Goals, national human development reports, and formulation of the PRGSP and the plan of action for its implementation, with the mobilization of resources through a donor conference (Mauritius, December 2005) at which pledges amounted to some $200 million. Efforts focused on the creation and development of small and medium-sized industries (SMIs) and the promotion of microfinance. Partnerships were forged with decentralized financial institutions, local banks and external agencies (Arab Gulf Programme for United Nations Development Organizations (AGFUND), Trade Expansion Programme, World Bank, European Union), which offered credit lines to the beneficiary SMIs. The economic reintegration of former militia members in Anjouan has been undertaken. Cooperation with the United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF) has resulted in the preparation of a national policy framework for the definition of a microfinance policy.

8. In the area of democratic governance, UNDP played a key role in mobilizing the Multi-Donor Trust Fund for the implementation of the interim programme through its support for the holding of legislative elections, the start-up of the four Parliamentary Assemblies and the Constitutional Court and the first phase of administrative reform (establishment of a computerized personnel management system for State officials; establishment of the High Civil Service Authority; approval and implementation of organizational frameworks). UNDP supported the conduct of presidential elections in 2006 and has worked to establish a national human rights commission. Women's participation in decision-making is supported through a series of advocacy, training and legislative initiatives.

9. In the environmental sphere, UNDP supported: (a) the introduction of a geo-referenced database on human resources, documentation and species; (b) a self-evaluation of environmental management capacities in need of strengthening, in line with United Nations conventions on biological diversity, climate change, desertification and persistent organic pollutants; and (c) the development of co-management and sustainability tools for the Mohéli Marine Park.

10. The March 2006 midterm review resulted in a number of recommendations on the need, inter alia, to: (a) strengthen the monitoring of the programme's implementation; (b) define a strategy to ensure the sustainability of each project/programme's activities and achievements; and (c) build the capacities of aid management and coordination institutions (Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Economic Advisory Committee) and clarify their respective roles to enhance national ownership of the programme. The main lesson learned from past experience is that building institutional capacities is not useful unless a need for these capacities has been identified. Another major challenge is to channel human and financial resources from the diaspora into productive investments.

III. Proposed programme

A. Priorities and expected results

11. Bearing in mind the national priorities set out in the PRGSP, the country programme will contribute towards the achievement of three of the four UNDAF outcomes: by 2012, better income, employment and food security for poor and vulnerable population groups (UNDAF outcome 1); strengthened institutional and individual political and economic governance capacities at the national and island levels, based on the rule of law, gender equity and accountability (UNDAF outcome 2); and conservation of the integrity of ecosystems and exploitation of the eco-services they provide for the benefit of the population, particularly communities whose livelihoods depend on natural resources (UNDAF outcome 4).

12. The four intended outcomes of the country programme will contribute towards the achievement of three objectives of the second UNDP multi-year funding framework (MYFF): (a) achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and reduction of poverty; (b) strengthening of democratic governance; and (c) promotion of energy and environmental protection.

(a) Achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and reduction of poverty

Outcome 1: Introduction of a development management system at the Union level and in each of the three islands

13. The specific results for the achievement of this outcome are: (i) an integrated statistical information management system in operation at all levels, in line with the national strategy for statistical development; and (ii) a development planning, monitoring and evaluation system, including aid coordination.

Outcome 2: Adoption and implementation of poverty reduction policies in line with the Millennium Development Goals, particularly for women and youth

14. The expected results with regard to pro-poor policies are: (i) adoption of a national employment policy and strategy; (ii) adoption and implementation of a national microfinance policy and strategy and a national SMI strategy; (iii) preparation and approval of a national social protection policy and strategy; and (iv) revamping and implementation of national systems for the protection and promotion of gender equity.

(b) Strengthening of democratic governance

Outcome 3: Consolidation of democratic governance mechanisms and adaptation of the public administration to the new institutional framework

15. The specific expected results in the area of democratic governance are: (i) introduction and implementation of a new organizational and management framework for the public administration, including anti-corruption mechanisms; (ii) formulation, approval and implementation of a national decentralization strategy; (iii) harmonization of the country's legal framework with the regional and international human rights conventions ratified by the Comoros, and initiatives to spread awareness of this framework; (iv) design and adoption of a training system for judicial officials; (v) establishment of entities for the transparent, effective management of elections; and (vi) formulation and implementation of a capacity-building plan for parliamentarians.

(c) Promotion of energy and environmental protection for sustainable development

Outcome 4: Reduction of current trends towards environmental degradation and the loss of natural resources, as well as risk factors that increase vulnerability to natural and climatic events

16. The specific results expected are: (i) formulation and adoption of a national sustainable development strategy; (ii) implementation of a capacity-building strategy for sustainable environmental management; (iii) formulation and implementation of an integrated coastal area management (ICAM) scheme, including urban and rural development planning and reduction of natural and climatic risks; (iv) establishment/strengthening of terrestrial and marine protected areas co-managed with riparian communities; (v) protection, rehabilitation and restoration, using a participatory approach, of ecosystems outside protected areas; (vi) participatory approval of a national energy policy; (vii) participatory formulation and promotion of a water management scheme; and (viii) formulation and implementation of a plan for the prevention of geological, hydrological and climatic risks and disaster management.

B. Strategies

17. The programme's overall strategy is based on the premise that the problems of poverty, poor governance and environmental degradation in the Comoros are linked at both the local and national levels. To reverse these negative trends, it is necessary to take action in all three areas in a synergistic manner at the governmental level and the local level through joint actions to build systemic, institutional and individual

capacities. Such capacity-building initiatives will be based on a clear understanding of the capacities needed and of any gaps and constraints. Capacity-building is a precondition for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and for national ownership of the programme, in line with the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness.

18. Support will be aimed at establishing a national development planning and management system and introducing pro-poor policies and strategies, particularly in the areas of microfinance and energy, in line with the Millennium Development Goals. Actions will focus on strengthening democratic governance mechanisms at the governmental and local levels. Social dialogue will be promoted at all levels to facilitate communication among political, economic and social stakeholders to ensure the harmonious operation of the new institutional framework. UNDP will support national partners' efforts to institute a national sustainable development strategy that is not confined to environmental issues.

19. The environment is seen as the linchpin of a poverty reduction and growth strategy, as sustainable natural resource management is crucial for the conservation and improvement of the production base (agriculture, fisheries), economic diversification (tourism, new areas of agriculture), the long-term viability of growth and income and the formation of linkages with the world economy. Participatory environmental resource management is also an effective means of laying the foundation for local governance, with a view to achieving the Millennium Development Goals by giving stakeholders an active role in decision-making and resource management. Village communities and women will be targeted, since they derive their income primarily from natural resource exploitation. The planned actions are thus geared towards ensuring ecological, economic and social sustainability.

20. Partnership strategies will be developed for the purpose of attaining the intended outcomes, particularly in the framework of South-South cooperation. The participatory process of formulating the present programme has opened up prospects for cooperation with a number of development partners in the Comoros.

21. Four cross-cutting strategies will be implemented in each of the programme's components: advancement of women and of gender equity; disaster risk reduction in accordance with the Hyogo Framework for Action; capacity-building; and integration of information and communication technologies (ICTs). These strategies could be pursued through joint programmes with other United Nations entities, in line with the UNDAF. One such joint programme, in which UNDP will play an advocacy role, will be implemented in the area of combating HIV/AIDS.

IV. Programme management, monitoring and evaluation

22. The implementation, monitoring and evaluation system will be conducive to stakeholder participation and will be linked to the mechanisms provided for in the UNDAF, the programme of each of the resident United Nations organizations and the PRGSP. Programme management will be results-based and initiatives will make use of the national execution modality and, where applicable, other modalities, including the transfer of knowledge through expatriate nationals (TOKTEN). Management will reflect the UNDP and United Nations reform process. The harmonized approach to cash transfers to implementing partners will simplify

procedures and reduce transaction costs for the Government. It will also improve national partners' capacity to manage the aid they receive. The new risk management approach will be implemented. The Government and UNDP will together devise a strategy for mobilizing the necessary resources. Progress will be tracked by means of annual programme reviews. A midterm review and a final review will be conducted in 2010 and 2012, respectively, with the participation of the Government, civil society, United Nations organizations and other development partners. The results of these reviews will be used as inputs in evaluating the UNDAF. These actions should be geared to building the capacities of the country office.

Annex

Results and resources framework for the Comoros (2008-2012)

National priority in UNDAF cooperation area 1, "Economic growth and poverty reduction": Generate the conditions for sustainable economic development; boost the private sector by focusing on growth sectors.
UNDAF outcome 1: By 2012, better income, employment and food security for poor and vulnerable population groups.

MYFF objectives	Country programme outcomes and indicators	Country programme outputs	Output indicators	Role of partners	Indicative resources (in thousands of dollars)
1. Achieving the Millennium Development Goals and reducing poverty	**Establishment and launch of a system for development management, including aid coordination, at the Union level and in each of the three islands.** Operational planning system adapted to the new institutional framework; system efficiency; issuance of monitoring and evaluation reports on the PRGS, the Goals and aid.	**Launch of an integrated statistical information management system.** Launch of a system, operational throughout the country, for development planning, monitoring and evaluation, including aid coordination.	**Indicator:** Updated DevInfo database available to users. **Baseline:** Some socio-economic data on DevInfo. **Target:** Operational database management mechanism. **Indicator:** Development and aid coordination planning, monitoring and evaluation structures with the necessary capacities to fulfil their mission. **Baseline:** Ineffective national development management system. **Targets:** Efficient national planning system; operational aid coordination mechanism.	-Technical and financial support: European Union, Coopération française, United Nations, World Bank, UNFPA, UNICEF, WHO, UNDP -Technical support: UNIFEM, OHCHR, FAO, International Labour Office, UNESCO	**Core** TRAC 1: 470 **Other** World Bank: 600 Thematic trust fund (TTF): 600
	Adoption and implementation of poverty reduction policies and strategies in line with the Goals, particularly for women and youth. Adoption and implementation of a national pro-poor policy and strategy in the areas of employment, microfinance and social protection; integration of gender equity and ICT into policies, programmes and projects.	Adoption of a national employment policy and strategy. Adoption and implementation of a national microfinance policy and strategy and a national SMI strategy. Formulation and approval of a national social protection policy and strategy. Adaptation and launch of national gender equity protection and promotion systems.	**Indicator:** Unemployment rate, particularly among 15- to 24-year-olds and women. **Baseline:** Unemployment rate of 30 per cent among 15- to 24-year-olds. **Target:** Unemployment of less than 15 per cent among 15- to 24-year-olds. **Indicator:** Number of active SMIs in the non-agricultural production sector. **Baseline:** Relatively few microcredits granted and bank accounts opened. **Target:** At least a threefold increase in the number of microcredits granted per year and at least 50 per cent participation in the banking system.	-Technical and financial support: French Development Agency (AFD), European Union, International Labour Office, IFAD, UNCDF, UNDP, UNV, World Bank -Technical support: International Centre for Development and Research (CIDR) and other technical service providers	**Core** TRAC 1.1.1: 634 **Other** UNCDF: 2,000 AGFUND: 800 Japan: 1,000

			Indicator: Percentage of the population with social protection. **Baseline:** Very low social protection coverage. **Target:** Extension of social protection to at least 20 per cent of the population. **Indicator:** Percentage of women in decision-making bodies. **Baseline:** Almost no women in decision-making bodies. **Target:** Increase in women's participation to at least 10 per cent in legislative posts and 25 per cent in government posts.		
National priority in UNDAF cooperation area 2, "Governance": Strengthen governance and justice; promote gender equality and women's participation in economic, social, cultural and political life; build human rights promotion into the implementation of all development and poverty reduction programmes. **UNDAF outcome 2**: By 2012, strengthened institutional and individual political and economic governance capacities at the national and island levels, based on the rule of law, gender equity and accountability.					
2. Strengthening democratic governance	**Adaptation of democratic governance mechanisms and the public administration to the new institutional framework and enhancement of their efficiency.** Definition and pursuit of the mandates of administrative entities and organizational frameworks at all levels; involvement of national, island-level and local-level stakeholders in the decentralization system; autonomy of electoral management structures; strengthened capacity of the legislatures to perform their functions in terms of representation, law-making and oversight of the executive branch;	Launch of a new system for the management of public administration, including anti-corruption mechanisms. Formulation and implementation of a national decentralization strategy. Alignment of the country's legal framework with the human rights conventions ratified by the Comoros. Design and adoption of a training system for judicial officials. Establishment and operation of bodies for the transparent, effective management of elections. Formulation and implementation of a capacity-building plan for parliamentarians.	**Indicator:** Implementation of organizational frameworks and of mechanisms to monitor the use of public expenditure and property. **Baseline:** Completed organizational frameworks. **Targets:** Redeployment of State officials in accordance with the new organizational frameworks; regular issuance of reports of the National Audit Office. Implementing regulations on the division of powers; effective functioning of decentralized public services. **Baseline:** Promulgation of a framework law on the division of powers. **Target:** Functioning of the *communes* on the basis of this law and increase in women's representation in the Assemblies to at least 25 per cent. **Indicator:** Number of laws adopted and disseminated to harmonize the legal framework.	-Technical and financial support: European Union, Coopération française, Japan, IOC, AIMF, OIF, AIPLF; UNFPA, UNICEF, World Bank, OHCHR, UNESCO, UNODC, UNDP -Technical support: UNIFEM, DPA, BCPR	**Core** TRAC 1.1.1: 1,104 **Other** World Bank: 1,000 EU: 2,000 TTF: 1,500

	increase in women's representation in the four Assemblies and in municipal councils.		**Baseline:** Revision of one national law to align it with international conventions signed by the Comoros. **Target:** Alignment of at least four major national laws. **Indicator:** Adoption of a training plan. **Baseline**: Lack of any guiding framework for the training of judicial officials. **Target:** Training of judicial officials in accordance with a consensus-based judicial development plan. **Indicator:** Ownership, by the relevant stakeholders, of electoral management tools. **Baseline:** Ad hoc management of elections. **Target:** Institutionalization of electoral management structures and tools. **Indicator:** Number of laws promulgated at the initiative of the legislatures; mastery of tools for oversight of the executive branch. **Baseline:** Weak capacity of legislatures to perform their duties. **Target:** Legislatures that adopt draft laws and oversee government actions.		
National priority in UNDAF cooperation area 4, "Environment and sustainable development": Promote a healthy environment and guarantee that development is sustainable. **UNDAF outcome 4**: By 2012, conservation of the integrity of ecosystems and exploitation of the eco-services they provide for the benefit of the population, particularly communities whose livelihoods depend on natural resources.					
3. Promotion of energy and environmental management for sustainable development	**Significant reduction of current trends towards environmental degradation and the loss of natural resources, as well as risk factors that increase vulnerability to natural and climatic events.**	Adoption of a national sustainable development strategy. Implementation of a capacity-building strategy for sustainable environmental management. ICAM scheme. Establishment/strengthening of terrestrial and marine protected areas and co-	**Indicator:** Integration of environmental and sustainable development concerns into general and sectoral policies. **Baseline:** Little account taken of environmental concerns in development policies. **Target:** Building of institutional and human capacities for the proper integration of environmental concerns into development policies.	-Technical and financial support: European Union, Coopération française, AFD, IOC, international and regional conventions, Oxford University, Tervuren Museum, UNESCO Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission, WIOMSA,	

	Reduction of the rate of deforestation; area represented by protected areas in relation to the country's total land area; percentage of the area of unprotected ecosystems that benefits from sustainable management measures; rating of general water quality; length of coastlines protected by (a) living coral reefs, (b) mangroves; availability of the necessary national capacities for disaster risk prevention and reduction.	management of these areas with riparian communities. Protection and restoration initiatives for unprotected ecosystems. Participatory formulation of a national energy policy. Participatory formulation of a water management scheme. Formulation and implementation of a disaster risk prevention and management plan.	**Indicator:** Number of development decisions that are consistent with the ICAM scheme. **Baseline:** No existing ICAM scheme. **Target:** Harmonization of all development decisions with the ICAM scheme. **Indicator:** Representation of riparian communities in structures for the co-management of autonomous protected areas. **Baseline:** Co-management of the only existing protected area by the Government and riparian communities. **Target:** Participation of riparian communities in the co-management of each protected area established. **Indicator:** Percentage of degraded areas benefiting from restoration programmes. **Baseline:** Restoration programmes for about 3.6 per cent of such areas. **Target:** At least 10 per cent. **Indicator:** Number of investment decisions that are consistent with the energy policy. **Baseline:** No existing formal energy policy. **Target:** Rationalization of energy investments. **Indicator:** Number of investment decisions that are consistent with the water management scheme. **Baseline:** No existing water management scheme. **Target:** Adoption of a consensus-based water management scheme. **Indicator:** National and island-level emergency response structures that have the necessary capacities. **Baseline:** Preliminary version of a national emergency response plan. **Target:** Anticipation of major risks and implementation of prevention mechanisms.	PIROI, Conservation International, FFEM, University of la Réunion, Japan, GEF FAO, IFAD, UNDP, UNEP, UNV, UNESCO, UNICEF, World Bank, UN-Habitat, DESA, ISDR, BCPR, OCHA	

Abbreviations

AFD	French Development Agency
AGFUND	Arab Gulf Programme for United Nations Development Organizations
AIMF	Association internationale des maires et responsables des capitales et métropoles partiellement ou entièrement francophones (International Association of Mayors and Leaders of Partly or Wholly French-speaking Capital Cities and Metropolitan Areas)
AIPLF	International Assembly of French-speaking Parliamentarians
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (United Nations)
BCPR	Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery
ILO	International Labour Office
CIDR	International Centre for Development and Research
IOC	Indian Ocean Commission
DPA	Department of Political Affairs (United Nations)
PRGSP	Poverty Reduction and Growth Strategy Paper
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
GEF	Global Environment Facility
UNCDF	United Nations Capital Development Fund
FFEM	Fonds français pour l'environnement mondial (French Global Environment Facility)
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
ICAM	Integrated coastal area management
OHCHR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
OIF	Organisation internationale de la Francophonie (International Organization of La Francophonie)
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
WHO	World Health Organization
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
SIDS	Small island developing States
MYFF	Multi-year funding framework
GDP	Gross domestic product
PIROI	Indian Ocean Regional Intervention Platform
SMIs	Small and medium-sized industries
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme

UNV	United Nations Volunteers
PRGS	Poverty reduction and growth strategy
ISDR	International Strategy for Disaster Reduction
ICTs	Information and communication technologies
TOKTEN	Transfer of Knowledge through Expatriate Nationals
TRAC	Target for resource assignment from the core
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
DESA	Department of Economic and Social Affairs (United Nations)
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNIFEM	United Nations Development Fund for Women
WIOMSA	Western Indian Ocean Marine Science Association